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ABSTRACT

This study, using data collected from 18,817 college students by the American Council on Education and the Higher Education Research Institute, addresses the extent to which college impacts students' sense of the importance of promoting racial understanding. Multiple regression analysis is used to study the manner in which various background characteristics, experiences, involvements, and college characteristics are related to the development of this particular attitude toward diversity. Specifically, the development of this attitude is mediated by many variables that are independent of the student's race, or any other background characteristics, and almost entirely dependent on the sorts of activities and courses she or he elects. These findings strongly support the notion that students' college activities, courses, and involvements are highly predictive of attitude formation regarding issues of diversity, even after controlling for other influences--a finding that provides support for the injection of ethnic/gender studies courses into the curriculum, and the provision of venues for the discussion of diversity issues. Contains 11 references. (Author/GLR)

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Can We All Get Along? How College Impacts Students' Sense of the Importance of Promoting Racial Understanding

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Running head: PROMOTING RACIAL UNDERSTANDING

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Abstract

This study addresses the extent to which college impacts students' sense of the importance of promoting racial understanding. Multiple regression analysis is used to study the manner in which various background characteristics, experiences, involvements, and college characteristics are related to the development of this particular attitude toward diversity. Specifically, the development of this attitude is mediated by many variables that are independent of the student's race, or any other background characteristics, and almost entirely dependent on the sorts of activities and courses s/he elects. These findings strongly support the notion that students' college activities, courses, and involvements are highly predictive of attitude formation regarding issues of diversity, even after controlling for other influences--a finding that provides support for the injection of ethnic/gender studies courses into the curriculum, and the provision of venues for the discussion of diversity issues.

Can We All Get Along? How College Impacts Students' Sense of the Importance of Promoting Racial Understanding

Institutions of higher education continually strive to create an environment conducive to the exchange of ideas--an exchange that should lead to an increased desire for tolerance and understanding. However, much of the discourse surrounding the diversification of the campus environment has extended beyond an exchange of ideas to a series of incessant debates over key issues. Some of these issues include desegregation policies, policies that exclude women from all-male campuses, the alleged effects of affirmative action legislation, and the inclusion of ethnic and feminist perspectives in the curriculum (Dentler, 1991). Although debate is a requisite component of any attempt at policy formation, it seems that the type of debate surrounding diversification policies has exacerbated an already negative climate for diversity issues within American higher education. More importantly, the utility of diversification policies is masked by the negative feelings these debates engender.

Despite the negatives, many institutions recognize the importance of diversity on campus. Most institutions actively pursue and implement policies that are intended to promote racial understanding and tolerance both among students and among faculty. Amidst these efforts, however, students and faculty continue to report incidents of racial tension and violence on campuses (Astin, Treviño & Wingard, 1991; Bunzel, 1992; Gordon, 1991; Gurowitz, 1991), and

administrations are increasingly challenged to address the alarming display of racial intolerance. Given this unfortunate reality, many questions arise about the impact of college on racial understanding and tolerance. How important is promoting racial understanding to students? Does college increase or decrease the importance students place on promoting racial understanding? More importantly, in what ways does college impact how important students view the promotion of racial understanding?

This paper addresses how four years of college impacts students' sense of the importance of promoting racial understanding. Using data collected from a cohort of students who entered college in 1985, (and were followed-up with in 1989), trends in students' ratings regarding the importance of promoting racial understanding, as well as how these ratings differ among students are explored. Moreover, a discussion of how college both promotes and hinders the development of this particular attitude is provided. In light of these findings, implications for policy and curricular modifications are discussed.

Methodology

Sample

The data used for this study are derived from data collected by the American Council on Education and the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) of the University of California at Los Angeles. Derived from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), data used for this study consist of responses from

students in the 1985 Freshman Survey as well as the 1989 Follow-up Survey. These data are comprised of the responses of nearly 290,000 entering college students from over 546 different institutions. A sample of 18,887 students (11,275 women; 7,612 men) was used that had been prepared by HERI. Selection and weighting procedures are described in detail in documentation provided by HERI.

Methods

The dependent measure consisted of one of the items on both the 1985 Freshman Survey and the 1989 Follow-up Survey which reads: "Indicate the importance to you personally of helping to promote racial understanding". This variable was scored on a Likert-type scale (with "1" being "not important" and "4" being "essential"). Exploratory analyses in the form of cross tabulations were performed to observe changes in the dependent measure over four years of college attendance. Additional cross tabulations were conducted to observe the influence of third variables (e.g., race, and the discussion of racial issues) on the dependent measure. After the initial exploratory analyses, blocked stepwise regression analysis was used in an attempt to construct a model that clarifies which variables mediate and/or predict the development (or changes in) the desire to promote racial understanding.

Variables

Initially, those variables in the data set thought to affect the dependent measure were identified and categorized as either input,

environmental, or intermediate-outcome variables. As explained in Astin (1991), variables are entered into a regression equation in the proposed order in which they are believed to affect, or be experienced by, the student. Therefore, student characteristics such as gender and race, and other characteristics which help to define the student's pre-college experience such as parental level of education, constitute the first block to enter the model--the input block. Subsequent to the input block, variables that describe the environment or context (aspects of the institution such as the number of full-time faculty, the proportions of different ethnic groups in the student body, and the institutional affiliation) are entered in a block called the environmental block. Finally, variables that can be considered outcomes in and of themselves, occur prior to measurement of the dependent variable, and directly or indirectly influence the dependent variable (e.g., various involvement measures, views about the college attended, types of courses taken), are entered as a block called intermediate-outcomes.

This procedure allows the impact of college environments to be understood after controlling for various student input characteristics; allows attitudes about college, and choices made with respect to activities during college, to be understood independent of students' background characteristics and the college environment; and allows changes in the dependent measure to be evaluated at each successive

stage in the model. Table 1 shows the variables used in this study, grouped in their appropriate blocks, along with each variable's simple

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Insert Table 1 about here

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correlation with the dependent measure.

Results

Exploratory Analysis

Changes in Student Ratings

Before entering the variables described earlier into the regression model, it was important to see how students' desire to promote racial understanding changed after four years of college. Table 2 shows the general distribution of how students rated the importance of promoting racial understanding. Specifically, this table shows that, of the entering freshman who thought promoting racial understanding was personally "Essential", 41.6% continued to think so after four years of college. Few of these students (5.4%) switched their view in an extreme fashion from "Essential" to "Not Important". Mostly, these students' latter views remained relatively similar to their initial views, changing from "Essential" to "Very Important" (34.1%) or to "Somewhat Important" (18.9%).

Table 2 also shows that, of the freshmen who felt promoting racial understanding was "Very Important", 36.2% continued to think

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Insert Table 2 about here

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so after four years of college. Only 8.7% of these students switched their view in an extreme fashion from "Very Important" to "Not Important", with the majority of students switching to either "Essential" or "Somewhat Important" (40.7% and 33.4%, respectively).

This indicates that students who enter college with the opinion that promoting racial understanding is essential continue to feel it is either essential or very important after four years of college. Furthermore, those students who enter college feeling it is very important to promote racial understanding are more likely to strengthen their view or remain stable after four years of college, than to decrease their conviction.

Lastly, Table 2 shows that, of the students who as entering freshmen indicated that promoting racial understanding was "Not important", 44.3% continued to think so after four years of college. This group of students remained relatively stable in their view, as few shifted drastically from "Not Important" to "Essential" (4.0%). In general, these students increased their ratings to "Somewhat Important" (39.3%), with an increase to "Very Important" (12.3%) occurring less often.

Overall, there is a degree of change over four years in terms of students' views regarding the importance of promoting racial understanding. This change is more clearly shown in Table 3, which

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Insert Table 3 about here

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displays the net percentage of change in ratings between the time students entered college, and four years later. It is apparent that the most extreme views, "Essential" and "Not Important", show a net increase in the percentage of students feeling that way (+ 4.8% and + 2.2%, respectively). Generally speaking, after four years of college, most students are gravitating toward either of the extreme ends of the scale. These increases in both extremes appear to be caused by students who are shifting from the categories "Very Important" and "Somewhat Important", both of which show a net decrease in the percentage of students indicating each (- .80% and - 6.1%, respectively).

Although it is clear that some students are developing a stronger sense of importance about promoting racial understanding after four years of college, some are also feeling it to be less important than when they entered college. However, it is also clear that the majority of students (46.3%) enter college rating the importance of promoting racial understanding moderately (i.e., "Somewhat Important"). Therefore, most students enter college with views that are at neither extreme. In fact, the group of students who view the promotion of

racial understanding as "Somewhat Important" exhibits the largest degree of net change (- 6.1%). Interpreted as evidence for the plasticity of students' views with respect to promoting racial understanding, it is clear that students' views can and are influenced during four years of college attendance. It is unclear from this depth of analysis who changes their views, and whether these changes are more toward the positive or negative end of the spectrum. Therefore, the influence of college can clearly be either to strengthen students' convictions toward promoting diversity, or to weaken it.

The previous exploratory exercises provide an overall picture of change with respect to students' ratings of the personal importance of promoting racial understanding. However, they do not provide any insight into what, besides four years time, could be mediating that change. With this in mind, two additional cross tabulations were performed in which the differential changes in students' ratings were first expressed as a function of race (Black and White), and secondly as a function of whether or not the student discussed racial or ethnic issues in college.

Differential Ratings of Blacks and Whites

Table 4 shows the differential ratings of the importance of promoting racial understanding as a function of being either Black or White. Although the sample is clearly over represented with Whites, some interesting trends are immediately apparent. For example, both the number of Black students and White students indicating that

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Insert Table 4 about here

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promoting racial understanding was personally "Essential" to them increased over four years time. This increase however was nearly three times larger for Blacks than for Whites, indicating that Blacks are definitely more likely to change their responses to the highest level of personal importance after four years of college. These results may shed light onto the differential perceptions of racial climates on campus between Blacks and Whites. Clearly, Blacks perceive a greater need for racial understanding than Whites. Because Blacks are more likely to experience the negative impacts of racial tension on campus, it is not surprising that this difference exists.

Table 4 also shows that Blacks demonstrate a decrease in the percentage of students rating "Not Important" (-.40%) whereas Whites demonstrate an increase (+2.4%). Furthermore, the relative percentage of Whites who feel promoting racial understanding is "Not Important" after four years of college (21.5%) is nearly eight times larger than the percentage of Blacks (2.7%). This last finding suggests that the previously reported increases in the number of students rating either the extremes of "Essential" or "Not Important" after four years of college occur in the form of a bimodal distribution--Blacks moving toward "Essential", and Whites moving toward "Not Important". Although racial differences are apparent in how students change their

ratings, it cannot be concluded that race alone causes these differences. Specifically, the next cross tabulation suggests a behavior-specific variable (something within the student's control) that could help explain changes in these ratings?

Differential Ratings as a Function of Discussing Racial Issues

The change in students' ratings can also be expressed as a function of another variable, whether or not students discussed racial/ethnic issues during their four years of college. Table 5 shows the differential ratings among students who did and did not discuss racial/ethnic issues during college. It is immediately clear that having discussed racial or ethnic issues in college has an extreme impact on the degree of importance students place on promoting racial understanding. This is indicated by the fact that for the students who

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Insert Table 5 about here

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did discuss racial/ethnic issues, there is a shift toward "Essential" and "Very Important" (+6.4 and +.08, respectively), and a shift away from "Somewhat Important" and "Not Important" (-5.8% and -1.4%, respectively).

The effect of discussing racial/ethnic issues during college is made more salient when looking at the group of students who reported not having discussed racial/ethnic issues during college. Of these students, the only increase after four years was in the "Not

Important" ranking (+13.7%). In fact, students who did not discuss racial/ethnic issues in college shifted to "Not Important" nearly ten times more often than students who did discuss racial/ethnic issues. Interestingly, Blacks are more likely to discuss racial/ethnic issues in college (r = .15) than Whites (r = - .14).

The exploratory nature of cross tabulations is insufficiently detailed enough to reveal the effects of numerous variables on changes in the students' views about the importance of promoting racial understanding. With this in mind, multiple regression was employed to discern the individual contribution of many different variables in the prediction of these changes.

Multiple Regression Results

Associated Input Variables

There are many student input characteristics which, after controlling for the effects of the college environment, and the effects of involvements, are associated with students' ratings of the importance of promoting racial understanding. Table 6 shows a summary of the

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Insert Table 6 about here

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changes in the standardized regression coefficient (Beta) of each variable at successive stages in the development of the regression model. Based on Astin (1991), the Beta values can be compared to the original zero-order correlation between the variables and the

dependent measure. In other words, the Beta values represent the new simple r between the variable and the dependent measure after each successive step in the equation. For this reason, Beta will be subsequently expressed as r.

The variable having the strongest association (r = .24) with students' ratings after four years of college is what they rated as freshman. That is, the ratings the students give upon entering college seem to be highly predictive of how they answer later on. This effect should not be seen as one that is direct. Namely, the more important an entering freshman rates promoting racial understanding, the more likely s/he will do the kinds of things, and interact in the types of activities that are also associated with rating the promotion of racial understanding as important. Generally speaking then, these students have a propensity for doing the types of things and talking about the kinds of issues that are germane to thinking that promoting racial understanding is important. The next question is, what characterizes this propensity or, who are these students?

In terms of race, the regression clearly shows that being Black, Chicano, Native American, or female are all positively associated with feeling that promoting racial understanding is important (r = .09, .01, .01, and .03, respectively). Conversely, being White is clearly negatively associated with this belief (r = -.05). However, the input characteristics associated with the belief that promoting racial understanding is important are not just limited to race.

Students' beliefs regarding the appropriateness of busing as a means to ensuring equality in the schools (r = .02), and their belief that women should get equal pay for doing work equal to men's (r = .02) are both positively associated with believing that promoting racial understanding is important. These last two findings are no great surprise because they simply validate the notion that our belief system regarding social issues of equity will be positively related to how important we think it is to promote racial understanding. This is further substantiated by the fact that the students who enter college believing that an individual can do little to change society are more likely to think promoting racial understanding is not important (r = -.02).

One interesting finding is that students who indicate that one of the main reasons they are entering college is to be financially well off in the future are more likely to think promoting racial understanding is not important (r = -.04). Therefore, it appears that these students are being impacted in a slightly different manner than those who do not indicate financial security as a primary goal. Further studies of these students might shed light on the differential impact with regard to the development of sensitivity to the importance of racial understanding.

A few other input characteristics initially appear to be associated with students' feelings regarding the promotion of racial understanding. Specifically, parental level of education, both father's and mother's, are positively associated (r = .07 and .09, respectively)

with feeling that the promotion of racial understanding is important. However, to conclude that parental level of education is a primary force in the development of this view would be premature. After controlling for the effects of inputs, the regression model shows that although mother's level of education is important, its effects are partially explained by father's level of education (as demonstrated by the drop in the Beta of mother's education once father's education enters the equation). Moreover, the effects of parental education continue to be further explained (the Betas decrease even more) when involvements are controlled. Specifically, once the students' involvements are factored into the equation, the Betas for mother's level of education and father's level of education substantially drop (r = .00 and .01, respectively) thus indicating that parental level of education has a negligible effect on students ratings of the importance to promote racial understanding; any effect observed initially in the model is due primarily to the involvements of the student.

Generally, this supports Pace's (1984) assertion that when determining the impact of college on a student, what the student does (in terms of both quantity and quality) is more important than what the student brings to college. This is an important finding because it shows that the college environment (or experience) has a strong influence on how students feel regarding the importance of promoting racial understanding, regardless of their previous experiences or background characteristics.

Associated Characteristics of the College Environment

Several college or environmental characteristics further explain the development of students' feelings toward the importance of promoting racial understanding. For example, as the enrollments of Asian and Native American students increase, students' are more likely to feel promoting racial understanding is important (r = .01 and .02, respectively). In addition, as the faculty become more oriented toward issues of diversity, students' sensitivity toward the importance of racial understanding increases (r = .01). Conversely, the number of full-time faculty is negatively associated (r = -.01) with feeling it important to promote racial understanding. More sense can be made of this finding by acknowledging the fact that the proportion of female faculty is positively associated (r = .03) with feeling it important to promote racial understanding. In addition, as the proportion of male faculty increases, students' views gravitate toward believing that promoting racial understanding is not important (r = - .03) Because the majority of full-time faculty are males (and because being a male faculty person is negatively associated with feeling it important to promote racial understanding) it is easy to understand why the number of full-time faculty would be negatively associated with the dependent measure. Generally speaking, the inclusion of females in academia appears to play a significant role in the development of positive attitudes toward the importance of promoting racial diversity.

Another finding is that as the institution increases its emphasis on diversity (through the provision of resources, programs, etc.), students feel it is less important to promote racial understanding (r = -.04). This paradoxical finding is best explained by what I call the "resentment factor". The finding that institutional diversity emphasis is negatively associated with the dependent measure supports the notion that currently, a negative climate exists regarding the provision of an affirmative action program (and associated activities) on campus. Perhaps as the perception that minorities' interests are being emphasized goes up, resentment toward minorities also increases. Because the sample used in this study is largely non-minority, it makes sense that any increased emphasis by the institution toward diversity issues would be met with resentment by those students who feel the emphasis is already too strong--a notion supported by numerous studies of the campus racial climate (Astin, Treviño & Wingard, 1991; Bunzel, 1992; Gordon, 1991; Gurowitz, 1991). A campus racial climate characterized by inter-racial resentment is certainly not conducive to wanting to promote racial understanding.

Associated Intermediate Outcomes

As noted earlier, student involvements are crucial in mediating the effects of various input characteristics (e.g., race) on the rating of the importance of promoting racial understanding. The regression equation shows this clearly as the changes in Beta are most profound when the block containing involvements enters the equation.

Perhaps no other single involvement or activity is as predictive of students' ratings as is whether or not they discussed racial/ethnic issues while in college (r = .22). This effect is partially explained by whether or not the student attends a racial/cultural awareness workshop during college (the Beta drops from r = .27 to r = .26 at this step in the equation). In addition, this relationship is further decreased when we factor in whether or not a student has had conversations with a person of a different ethnicity from themselves (Beta decreases from .12 to .07). Intuitively, this all makes sense because it is at a racial/cultural awareness workshop where the discussion of racial/ethnic issues will occur most often. In addition, it is safe to assume that discussions of racial/ethnic issues will likely occur among racially mixed social groups.

Having been a president of one or more organizations prior to coming to college is positively associated with thinking it is important to promote racial understanding, but this effect disappears after factoring in whether or not the student attended a racial or cultural awareness workshop in college. The revelation of a seemingly positive association as being negligible or non-existent also occurs with other input variables. For example, the frequency of attending religious services is at first, negatively associated with thinking it is important to promote racial understanding (r = -.01), but after factoring in whether or not a student discussed racial/ethnic issues in college, this relationship disappears entirely.

Drinking alcohol is negatively associated before controlling for inputs (r = -.02), then after controlling for the environment, it is not associated at all (r = .00). When the discussion of issues of race/ethnicity is controlled, the association once again becomes (and remains) negative (r = -.03). This implies that drinking by itself is not necessarily associated with thinking that promoting racial understanding is unimportant. However, when coupled with a lack of discussion of racial/ethnic issues, drinking clearly has a negative impact on thinking it is important to promote racial understanding. Once again however, drinking and lack of discussions regarding racial/ethnic issues are not the sole determinants--discerning who these students are (specifically, who is most likely to drink, and who is most likely to not discuss racial/ethnic issues) may shed more light onto this finding.

Further evidence that discussing racial/ethnic issues mediates the effects of other variables is clearly seen with respect to two other variables--the enrollment in either women's studies or ethnic studies courses. Enrolling in a women's or ethnic studies course is positively associated with thinking it is important to promote racial understanding after inputs and environments are controlled (r = .19 and .16, respectively). However, these associations diminish once the discussion of racial/ethnic issues in college is controlled for (Beta drops to .11 and .10, respectively). This is an important finding because it implies that students are most likely to engage in a dialogue regarding

issues of equity, gender, and race in women's and/or ethnic studies courses. No other types of courses (e.g., math, sciences, humanities, social sciences) have as dramatic an effect. Generally speaking, although history courses are positively associated with thinking it is important to promote racial understanding (Astin, 1993), it is ethnic and gender studies courses that most notably impact students' views. Not only does this illuminate the need for institutions to adopt these courses if they are serious about improving racial understanding on campus, but this finding suggests that courses presently in the curriculum are not able (in their current incarnations) to impact students' views about the importance of promoting racial understanding to the extent that some faculty and administrators believe. In fact, after controlling for input and background characteristics (i.e., the propensity to take certain courses), not having taken ethnic or gender studies courses continues to be associated with thinking that the promotion of racial understanding is unimportant.

Having discussed racial/ethnic issues in college also promotes positive evaluations of the college's climate toward diversity by students after four years time. For example, students who discussed issues of race/ethnicity are more likely to feel that the college they attended is striving to promote appreciation of a multi-cultural campus environment (r = .10), that the college has a climate conducive to the airing of differences of opinion (r = .07), and that there is not

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Insert Table 7 about here

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much racial conflict at the college (r = .04). In summary, Table 7 provides a clear outline of all the variables associated with students' ratings of the importance of promoting racial understanding. Table 7 also shows whether the variables were positively associated, or negatively associated with the dependent measure.

Conclusion

This study shows that many variables are associated with students' ratings of the importance of promoting racial understanding. In addition, several college environmental characteristics play a crucial role in mediating students responses. Most importantly however, this study indicates that discussions of racial/ethnic issues among students during college contribute positively to the formation of an attitude that fosters the promotion of racial understanding. This last finding is further supported by the fact that when students do not discuss these issues, they perceive their college as having more racial tension and being too sensitive to the needs of minorities. Most importantly though, a lack of discussion of racial/ethnic issues leads to an overall view that promoting racial understanding is unimportant.

Given this, the policy implications for institutions are clear. It is important for institutions to provide more arenas for the discussion of racial/ethnic issues throughout the college experience. As this study

showed, the provision of more ethnic/gender studies courses is an excellent way to achieve this goal. However, this study also revealed a paucity of opportunities for students to discuss racial/ethnic issues in more traditional courses. Too often, professors and administrators shy away from the often explosive topics of ethnicity, race, culture, or even gender. However, it is clear that unless we begin to take more chances with what we teach, and what we include as topics of discussion in our current courses, students will be more likely to report that it is unimportant to promote racial understanding--a result of college which, in this day and age, is certainly not conducive to a better American society.

It can not be stressed enough that what a student does, who s/he interacts with, and the types of issues s/he discusses during college, all play a more crucial role in the development of a positive attitude toward promoting racial understanding than does what the student brings to college (e.g., race, SES, parental level of education, etc.). This is a positive note on which to conclude as it implies that our students need not fall victim to their previous experiences and attitudes. College can and does have a positive impact of the formation of students' attitudes regarding the importance of promoting racial understanding. By seizing the opportunity to make that positive impact, we will not only improve students' sensitivity toward the importance of promoting racial understanding, but will also improve their attitudes toward issues of race, gender, culture, and ethnicity in

general. It is with the realization of this end that colleges will begin to experience a more conducive climate toward their policies regarding diversity, as well as toward the general climate toward diversity on campus.

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Table 1: Variables used to predict students' ratings of the importance of promoting racial understanding

Variables Entering	*r*
Input Characteristics	
Important to promote racial understanding ('85)	41
Race: Black/African-American	23
Goal: To be very well off financially	-09
Race: White/Caucasian	-22
Gender	10
Mother's level of education	09
Self Rating: Popularity relative to peers	06
View: Individual can do little to change society	-09
View: Busing is okay to achieve racial balance	13
View: Equal pay for women doing equal work	11
Was president of one or more organizations	08
Frequency of attending religious services	-01
Race: Chicano/Mexican-American	05
Father's level of education	07
Race: Native-American/Indian	04
Environmental Characteristics	
Mean: SES of student body	13
Mean: Faculty orientation toward diversity	19
Mean: Student intellectual self-esteem	09
Mean: Institutional diversity emphasis	15
Mean: Institutional social activism	23
% of student population that is Native American	00
Number of full-time faculty	-05
% Female faculty members	11
% Male faculty members	- 09
% of student population that is Asian	06
Intermediate Outcomes	
Discussed racial/ethnic issues while in college	45
Attended racial/cultural awareness workshop(s)	34
Socialized with someone of different ethnicity	27
Enrolled in ethnic studies course(s)	27
Discussed political/social issues while in college	32
Hours per week spent watching television	-13
Hours per week spent doing volunteer work	15
Frequency of drinking during college	-02
Enrolled in women's studies course(s)	19
School Priority: Develop appreciation for multi-cultural campus environment	21
View: A lot of racial conflict here	13
View: Many courses with minority perspectives	08
School Priority: Increase minorities on the faculty and administration	14
School Priority: Maintain climate for airing differences of opinion	15
View: Little trust between minorities and administration	09

Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program
Decimals omitted; *r* represents the zero-order correlation

Table 2: Students' Ratings of the Importance of Promoting Racial Understanding

	after four years of college			
as entering freshman	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Essential
Essential	5.4%	18.9%	34.1%	41.6%
Very Important	8.7	33.4	36.2	40.7
Somewhat Important	20.0	48.8	23.1	8.1
Not Important	44.3	39.3	12.3	4.0

Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program
Note: N = 17,726; r = .41; p < .001

Table 3: Changes in Ratings of the Importance of Promoting Racial Understanding

	Ratings given		
Rating	in 1985	in 1989	% Change
Essential	9.4%	14.2%	+ 4.8
Very Important	26.5	25.7	- .80
Somewhat Important	46.3	40.2	- 6.1
Not Important	17.8	20.0	+ 2.2

Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program
Note: N = 17,726; r = .41; $p < .001$

Table 4: Differential changes in the Personal Importance of Promoting Racial Understanding as a function of being either Black or White

	Percentage among					
	Blacks (*N* = 879)		*Whites* (*N* = 15,866)		*% Change, 1985 -- 1989 for*	
Rating	in 1985 was	in 1989 was	in 1985 was	in 1989 was	Black students	White students
Essential	37.5	49.4	7.5	11.7	+ 11.9	+ 4.2
Very Important	37.5	34.2	25.3	24.8	- 3.3	- 0.5
Somewhat Important	21.8	13.7	48.1	42.0	- 8.1	- 6.1
Not Important	3.1	2.7	19.1	21.5	- 0.4	+ 2.4

Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program
Note: N = 16,745; r = . 21 and -.20 for Blacks & Whites, respectively; p < .001

Table 5: Differential changes in the Personal Importance of Promoting Racial Understanding as a function of having engaged in discussions regarding racial and/or ethnic issues

	Among students who during college					
	did discuss racial and/or ethnic issues, (N = 13,243)		*did not discuss racial and/or ethnic issues, (N = 4,135)*		*% Change, 1985 -- 1989 for students who*	
Rating	% rating in 1985 was	% rating in 1989 was	% rating in 1985 was	% rating in 1989 was	discussed issues	did not discuss
Essential	11.2	17.6	3.7	2.7	+ 6.4	- 1.0
Very Important	29.2	30.0	17.7	11.8	+ .08	- 5.9
Somewhat Important	45.0	39.2	50.6	43.8	- 5.8	- 6.8
Not Important	14.6	13.2	28.0	41.7	- 1.4	+ 13.7

Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program
Note: N = 17,378; r = .41; p < .001

Table 6: Summary of Changes in Beta after Controlling for Various Steps in Model

Variables Entering	Beta after...					
	R	r	Step 1	Inputs	Environment	Final Step
Input Characteristics						
Important to promote racial understanding ('85)	.41	.41	.41	.33	.32	.24
Race: Black/African-American	.44	.23	.15	.11	.11	.09
Goal: To be very well off financially	.44	-.09	-.06	-.08	-.07	-.04
Race: White/Caucasian	.45	-.22	-.14	-.08	-.07	-.05
Gender	.45	.10	.08	.06	.05	.03
Mother's level of education	.46	.09	.06	.04	.02	.01
Self Rating: Popularity relative to peers	.46	.06	.04	.04	.04	.01
View: Individual can do little to change society	.46	-.09	-.05	-.04	-.04	-.02
View: Busing is okay to achieve racial balance	.46	.13	.06	.04	.03	.02
View: Equal pay for women doing equal work	.47	.11	.06	.04	.03	.02
Was president of one or more organizations	.47	.08	.05	.03	.03	.00
Frequency of attending religious services	.47	-.01	-.02	-.03	-.01	.00
Race: Chicano/Mexican-American	.47	.05	.04	.02	.02	.01
Father's level of education	.47	.07	.04	.03	.00	.00
Race: Native-American/Indian	.47	.04	.03	.02	.01	.01
Environmental Characteristics						
Mean: SES of student body	.48	.13	.09	.09	.12	.04
Mean: Faculty orientation toward diversity	.48	.19	.13	.08	.03	.01
Mean: Student intellectual self-esteem	.48	.09	.05	.02	-.06	-.06
Mean: Institutional diversity emphasis	.48	.15	.10	.07	.04	-.04
Mean: Institutional social activism	.48	.23	.15	.08	.02	-.01
% of student population that is Native American	.48	.00	.01	.01	.02	.02
Number of full-time faculty	.48	-.05	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.01
% Female faculty members	.48	.11	.06	.05	.03	.03
% Male faculty members	.48	-.09	-.08	-.07	-.03	-.03
% of student population that is Asian	.48	.06	.04	.02	.03	.01
Intermediate Outcomes						
Discussed racial/ethnic issues while in college	.57	.45	.37	.34	.33	.22
Attended racial/cultural awareness workshop(s)	.59	.34	.27	.23	.21	.10
Socialized with someone of different ethnicity	.59	.27	.21	.19	.19	.08
Enrolled in ethnic studies course(s)	.60	.27	.21	.18	.16	.07
Discussed political/social issues while in college	.60	.32	.25	.25	.23	.08
Hours per week spent watching television	.60	-.13	-.09	-.08	-.07	-.05
Hours per week spent doing volunteer work	.60	.15	.11	.10	.09	.03
Frequency of drinking during college	.60	-.02	.00	.01	.00	-.03
Enrolled in women's studies course(s)	.60	.19	.15	.12	.10	.02
School Priority: Develop appreciation for multi-cultural campus environment	.61	.21	.17	.15	.14	.07
View: A lot of racial conflict here	.61	.13	.11	.10	.09	.03
View: Many courses with minority perspectives	.61	.08	.06	.05	.03	-.03
School Priority: Increase minorities on the faculty and administration	.61	.14	.11	.10	.08	.03
School Priority: Maintain climate for airing differences of opinion	.61	.15	.12	.11	.09	.03
View: Little trust between minorities and administration	.61	.09	.07	.06	.06	.02

Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program
Note: N = 18,887; R-square = .37; $p < .01$

Table 7: Summary of variables and the nature of their associations to ratings of the importance of promoting racial understanding

Variables Positively Associated	Variables Negatively Associated
• 1985 Rating on importance of promoting racial understanding	• Goal in 1985: To be well off financially
• Race: Black, African-American	• Race: White, Caucasian
• (Race: Chicano, Latino, Hispanic)	• View in 1985: Individual can do little to change society
• (Race: Native American, Indian)	• Mean intellectual self-esteem of students in institution
• Gender: Female	• Institution's emphasis on diversity
• (Mother's level of education)	• (Mean institutional social activism)
• (Self rating in 1985: Popularity relative to peers)	• % of male faculty
• View in 1985: Busing is okay to achieve racial balance in schools	• (% of full-time faculty)
• View in 1985: Equal pay for women doing equal work	• Hours per week spent watching television
• Mean SES of student body	• Frequency of drinking
• (Faculty oriented toward diversity)	• Student view: Many courses with minority perspectives
• % of Native American students	
• (% of Asian students)	
• Discussed racial/ethnic issues	
• Attended racial/cultural awareness workshop in college	
• Socialized with someone of different ethnicity from self	
• Enrolled in ethnic studies course	
• Enrolled in women's studies course	
• Hours per week spent doing volunteer work	
• Student view: My college develops an appreciation for multi-cultural campus	
• Student view: A lot of racial tension on campus	
• Student view: Increasing minority representation in faculty is important to my school	
• Student view: My school maintains a climate for airing differences of opinion	
• Student view: There is little trust between minorities and administration on campus	

Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program
Note: Variables in parentheses have a final Beta of less than ± .02